

REMARKS / ARGUMENTS

In this reply, Claims 1-2, 9-17, and 22-23 are amended; no claims are added or canceled. Thus, Claims 1-26 and 28 are pending in the application. The amendments to the claims do not add any new matter to this application. Each issue raised in the Office action mailed January 2, 2009 is addressed below.

I. ISSUES RELATING TO PRIOR ART

A. CLAIMS 1-4, 9-10, 12-16, 21, 24, AND 28 --- 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-4, 9-10, 12-16, 21, 24, and 28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Pat. Pub. 2001/0017700 (“Homma”) in view of U.S. Patent 6,631,247 (“Motoyama”). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Current Claim 1 recites the following (emphasis added):

A multifunction peripheral configured to perform the steps of:

requesting first device-related information from a network device over a network, wherein the first device-related information includes meter-reading information;
receiving the first device-related information from the network device over the network;
obtaining multifunction peripheral information, wherein the obtaining multifunction peripheral information includes reading a meter of the multifunction peripheral;
generating a device-related report based at least in part on said first device-related information and based at least in part on the multifunction peripheral information; and
sending said device-related report to a recipient device.

Independent claims 25-26 and 28 contain the same or similar features to the bolded features in current Claim 1 above. The Examiner is respectfully requested to review the

embodiment of the invention illustrated in Fig. 1 for a fuller appreciation of the novel structure of Claims 1, 25-26, and 28.

These independent claims particularly point out the reading and use of meter data; see, for example, current Claim 1 which recites the features “requesting first device-related information from a network device over a network, wherein the first device-related information includes meter-reading information” and “obtaining multifunction peripheral information, wherein the obtaining multifunction peripheral information includes reading a meter of the multifunction peripheral.”

Neither Motoyama nor Homma disclose or suggest the use of meter-reading information used to generate a device-related report. Meter-reading data is not included in the data structure illustrated in Figure 25 of Motoyama; the data structure tracks information on a per-job basis. Similarly, Figures 8A and 8B of Homma tracks information on a per-job basis.

Accordingly, even if the references were combined, the combination would fail to disclose or suggest at least one claimed feature in current Claim 1 and each of Claims 25-26 and 28.

Regarding the prior rejection of Claim 1, the Office Action at pages 3-4 correlates the “generating” and “sending” steps to Homma, stating:

- (1) regarding claim 1:
 - Homma ‘700 discloses a multifunction peripheral (100 in Fig. 1) configured to perform the steps of:
 - generating a device-related report based on a device-related information (paragraph [0074], where the information collected is being formatted in a record); and
 - sending said device-related report to a recipient device (paragraph [0076], lines 6-12, where the information is stored in memory it is received by the requesting party).

This analysis fails to account that Applicants' claimed method includes three distinct objects: (1) a multifunction peripheral, (2) a network device, and (3) a recipient device. In Homma, a multifunction printer collects history information about itself and transmits this self-information to a host computer. See paragraphs [0074], [0076], and Fig. 9.

Regarding Motoyama, it too discloses a method in which a service device (such as business office devices 268 and 278 illustrated in Fig. 5) collects device information about itself, places the device information in a data structure such as the data structure illustrated in Fig. 25, and transmits this self-information to a resource center or service center (such as service machine 254 in Fig. 5).

Even if the Examiner were correct in designating service machine 254 as a multifunction peripheral, Motoyama would still fail to disclose or suggest the three object configuration of Applicants' claimed method. Unlike Applicants' claimed method, service machine 254 takes whatever information it receives and holds onto it, as opposed to transmitting it to a recipient device.

When taken together, Homma and Motoyama fail to disclose or suggest the three object configuration of Applicants' claimed method. Similarly, nothing in either Homma or Motoyama discloses or suggests Applicants' claimed method in which a multifunction peripheral is used as an intermediary device in the generation and transmission of a device-related report to a recipient device.

Accordingly, Applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the obviousness rejections based on the combination of Homma and Motoyama.

B. CLAIMS 5-8, 11, 17-20, 22-23, AND 25-26 --- 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 5, 20, 22-23, and 25-26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Homma, in view of Motoyama, and further in view of U.S. Pat. Pub. 2002/0046247 (“Iwase”).

Claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Homma, in view of Motoyama, and further in view of U.S. Patent 6,725,300 (“Nagasaki”).

Claims 7, 11, and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Homma, in view of Motoyama, and further in view of U.S. Patent 6,347,305 (“Watkins”).

Claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Homma, in view of Motoyama, and further in view of U.S. Pat. Pub. 2004/0184108 (“Takano”).

Claim 18 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Homma, in view of Motoyama, and further in view of WO 01/40907 (“Carter”).

Claim 19 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Homma, in view of Motoyama, and further in view of U.S. Patent 6,347,306 (“Swart”).

These rejections are respectfully traversed. No combination of one or more of the following {Motoyama, Homma, Iwase, Nagasaki, Watkins, Takano, Carter, Swart} cures the defects identified with respect to current Claim 1 and independent Claims 25-26 and 28 above. Accordingly, each of these claims is patentable at least for the reasons Claim 1

is patentable, and Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of all claim rejections.

II. CONCLUSION

The pending claims not discussed so far are dependent claims that depend on an independent claim that is discussed above. Because each of the dependent claims include the limitations of claims upon which they depend, the dependent claims are patentable for at least those reasons the claims upon which the dependent claims depend are patentable. Removal of the rejections with respect to the dependent claims and allowance of the dependent claims is respectfully requested. In addition, the dependent claims introduce additional limitations that independently render them patentable. Due to the fundamental difference already identified, a separate discussion of those limitations is not included at this time.

For the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims are patentable over the art of record, including the art cited but not applied. Accordingly, allowance of all claims is hereby respectfully solicited.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is believed that such contact would further the examination of the present application.

A petition for extension of time, to the extent necessary to make this reply timely filed, is hereby made. If applicable, a law firm check for the petition for extension of time fee is enclosed herewith. If any applicable fee is missing or insufficient, throughout the

pendency of this application, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any applicable fees and to credit any overpayments to our Deposit Account No. 50-1302.

Respectfully submitted,

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